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DE RUEHSO #0892 2271219
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 151219Z AUG 06
FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5617
INFO RHEHNSC/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 6692
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY 7362
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC 2541

UNCLAS SAO PAULO 000892

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STATE INR/R/MR; IIP/R/MR; WHA/PD

DEPT PASS USTR

USDOC 4322/MAC/OLAC/JAFEE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [OPRC](#) [OIIP](#) [ETRD](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: GWOT: AIRLINE TERROR PLOT; WESTERN
HEMISPHERE: CUBA: CASTRO'S HEALTH; SAO PAULO

1. "The Right Way To Fight Terror"

The lead editorial in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo (8/12) maintained: "Almost five years from the unprecedented September 11 attacks, only a few things in the world today are as clear as the futility and the boomerang effect of the war the US under the Bush administration has declared on terrorism. After the British secret service succeeded in aborting a plan to explode a dozen of commercial flights on their way to the US, the obvious correctness of the alternative way to fight the terrorist threat - not with bombs, but with continuous police and intelligence action supported by legal means - has become equally evident.... In the current war, planned violence and suicide attempts by enemies of civilized societies result not only in death and destruction, but produce collective hysteria, the trampling of liberal values in the name of defending them against barbarism, and manipulation of the public opinion by authoritarian leaning governments such as the Bush administration."

2. "Our Man In Havana"

Economist Eliana Cardoso, author of the book 'Cuba after Communism' (MIT Press, 1992), commented in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo (8/14): "Fidel Castro overthrew Fulgencio Batista's dictatorship in 1959 to replace it with another dictatorship.... The old tyrant's methods still have a follower in Hugo Chavez and his unquenchable thirst for power.... Cuba's current economic situation is improving thanks to the high price of nickel, tourism income and Hugo Chavez assistance.... But the commander is dying. His legacy is still uncertain. An idyllic scenario would be that of Cuba's gradual reinsertion into the Latin American community, with the introduction of democratic elections supported by economic growth. However, even those who believe in Raul Castro's pragmatism doubt that he is planning a democratic transition.... Some say Raul is a good administrator and, like Chinese Deng Xiaoping, he could open and reinforce the economy even while preserving a regime that does not respect human rights. But Raul is too old and does not have Fidel's popularity. Speculations about his succession will soon begin. It is hard to believe that an island less than a 30-minute flight from Miami will continue to be impermeable to political changes following the dictator's death.... The Cuban economy needs shock therapy, and its success depends on the US's change of posture from confrontation to cooperation. The first US step should be lifting the commercial embargo. Such embargos generally do not meet their goals and, in the case of Cuba, they do not destabilize Castro, but only help to mobilize the world's sentiment against the US.... A second step would be Cuba's admission as a member of the World Bank and the

IMF.... The transition of Central Europe's communist nations
indicates that there is life after communism."
McMullen